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Bethlehem 2000

The situation in the Middle East

Question of Palestine

Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Identical letters dated 2 October 2000 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council

In follow-up to my letter dated 29 September 2000, I regret to inform you that Israel, the occupying Power, has continued its campaign against the Palestinian people, massacring and injuring numerous Palestinian civilians and inflicting vast destruction of property. As of yesterday, 1 October 2000 and since the infamous visit to Al-Haram Al-Sharif by Mr. Ariel Sharon, Israeli security forces have killed 28 Palestinians, most of whom were civilians and a number of them children under 16 years of age (names of martyrs are annexed to this letter). During this period, the Israeli security forces have also injured at least 800 Palestinians, many of whom are in serious condition.

In this campaign, the Israeli security forces have used a plethora of lethal power. Israel has deployed snipers and used high-velocity ammunition as well as anti-tank missiles, rockets, grenades and even helicopter gunships. Israeli tanks have moved towards several Palestinian cities and some posts manned by Palestinian police. In specific cases on 1 October 2000 and to a lesser extent on 30 September 2000, some Palestinian police, appalled with the severity of Israeli attacks against Palestinian civilians, used their individual guns in a shooting exchange with Israeli forces. As a result, there have been several deaths among the personnel of the Palestinian police as well.

Since Thursday, 28 September 2000, Israel, the occupying Power, has committed an aggression against Al-Haram Al-Sharif, the third holiest site of Islam, and used excessive lethal force, mainly against Palestinian civilians protesting Israeli aggression and other oppressive policies. In many instances, the soldiers of

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the occupying Power have committed wilful killings, including the highly publicized killing of a 12-year-old boy, Mohammed Jamal Al-Durra, as well as wilfully causing great suffering and serious injury to many other Palestinians.

All of the above-mentioned actions constitute grave breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, which is applicable to all the territories occupied by Israel since 1967. In this regard, we believe that several Israeli soldiers have committed war crimes and must be held accountable.

We believe that the international community, specifically the Security Council, has a clear responsibility with regard to putting an end to the illegal actions being taken by Israel, the occupying Power, and for ensuring respect for the Fourth Geneva Convention as well as ensuring the safety and protection of Palestinian civilians. The intervention of the Security Council is also needed so that it might salvage the Middle East peace process and if possible resuscitate the efforts to reach a peaceful settlement between the parties. What is urgently needed at this time is ensuring the withdrawal of Israeli security forces from Al-Haram Al-Sharif and from the vicinity of Palestinian cities and towns, in addition to investigating the events of the last few days.

In the light of the above, we call for action by the international community, specifically for an immediate meeting of the Security Council to consider the situation in the Occupied East Jerusalem as well as the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory and to take the necessary measures in this regard in fulfilment of the Security Council's primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

I would be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of this letter distributed as an official document of the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 36, 40, 41 and 85, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Dr. Nasser **Al-Kidwa**
Ambassador, Permanent Observer of Palestine
to the United Nations

Annex to the identical letters dated 2 October 2000 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council

Names of martyrs killed by Israeli security forces in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, Friday, 29 September 2000 to Sunday, 1 October 2000

Friday, 29 September

1. Bilal Afana
2. Mohammed Hussein Farah
3. Yehia Faraj (17 years old)
4. Ousama Jedah
5. Haitham Owaida

Saturday, 30 September

1. Khalid Adli Al-Bazian (16 years old)
2. Nizzar Mahmoud Eidah (16 years old)
3. Zakharia Al-Kilanni
4. Mohammed Tawfik Al-Kalaq
5. Amjad Outhman Mesaeid
6. Mahmoud Anbara
7. Imad Esha
8. Mohammed Abdel Razik
9. Bassam Al-Balbeesi
10. Mohammed Jamal Al-Durra (12 years old)
11. Nabil Mohammed Al-Atla
12. Zeidan Al-Shamali
13. Maher Rajab Ubeid

Sunday, 1 October

1. Jihad Mahmoud Al-Alol (shot on Friday, 29 September)
2. Mohammad Ahmed Al-Hamas
3. Eyad Ahmad Al-Kashashi
4. Mustaffa Hilmi Ramadan
5. Hussam Naiem Bakheet
6. Samer Sameer Tabajah (10 years old)
7. Imad Abdelrahman Al-Anati
8. Salah Al-Fekhi
9. Mohammed Nabil Hamada
10. Hamad Jabr Radi (10 years old)